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ABSTRACT

There has been relatively little research into the ways in which language may be manipulated to increase social distance in interethnic and interracial encounters. The first part of this paper discusses three types of communicative distance, which reflect three different intensities of ethnocentrism: "low," "moderate," and "high." The three communicative distances are: (1) the distance of indifference, which reflects insensitivity and obliviousness toward out-groups, but relatively little hostility; (2) the distance of avoidance, which reflects high in-group loyalty and avoidance of out-groups; and (3) the distance of disparagement, which reflects feelings of hostility toward out-groups and a desire to disparage them. The second section discusses a pilot study conducted to test the empirical validity of the three communicative distances. In the study, a group of untrained judges was asked to determine which of the three communicative distances was reflected in each of four speech samples collected from meetings of various groups in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which were discussing desegregation in the public schools. The concluding section of the paper suggests directions for future research. (GW)

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BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP: UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATIVE DISTANCES AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

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BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP: UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATIVE DISTANCES AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

It has long been recognized that language and ethnic identity are related. Unfortunately, however, there is an absense of exhaustive international data on language behavior and thus the nature of the relationship has been fairly limited to specific cultural contexts. Thus much is known about the interaction between language and ethnicity in some cultures, while relatively little is known regarding this relationship in other societies. Fishman (1966) has attributed the paucity of information regarding language behavior in some cultures to the desire of many researchers to gain a somewhat greater conceptual and methodological refinement prior to embarking on such a massive undertaking as doing worldwide comparisons of language behavior.

Another area where there has been relatively little research is the manner in which language may be manipulated to increase social distance in interethnic and interracial encounters. Many intercultural communication scholars have developed conceptual models to explain barriers to effective intercultural communication, but few have been concerned with language and the manner in which it is used to increase communication barriers in many intergroup situations. All to often it is thought that if only people of different cultural backgrounds could get together and communicate, there would be fewer interethnic, interracial and international problems. The view that increased communication could overcome communication barriers and serve as a panacea for the social ills of the world is a naive point of view and one which may have impeded the interest of researchers in linguistic devices which may either intentionally or unintentionally function to create social distance. Moreover, too frequently intergroup conflict is attributed to "misunderstandings in communication" or to "lack of communication" without ever examining the linguistic entities that are an integral part of the communication between two or more persons of different cultural backgrounds.

In response to the neglect of previous researchers to consider the important role of specific linguistic characteristics and speech styles in generating barriers to intergroup communication the first part of the paper will briefly discuss three types of communicative distances, each reflecting a different intensity of ethnocentrism and different degree of perceived "ethnic threat" (Lukens, 1976)[1]. The second section of the paper will discuss a pilot study conducted to test the empirical validity of the three communicative distances and the soundness of the proposed methodology to be used in a future study. The findings as well as problem areas will be presented. The final section will entail a discussion of future directions for research stressing the need for examining the three communicative distances in varied cultural contexts and in a wide diversity of cultures including nations as well as subcultures (racial and ethnic groups) within various societies. The linguistic characteristics suggested for each of the three communicative distances (Lukens, 1976) will be discussed for the purpose of lending greater clarity to the various distances. It must be pointed out at the outset, however, that these suggested characteristics may not be applicable much beyond the dominant culture of the United States and hence they should be viewed as primarily restricted to that culture. Only a few of the character-

istics, I maintain, may apply more universally and not be limited to a particular culture or ethnic group.

COMMUNICATIVE DISTANCES AND INTENSITY OF ETHNOCENTRISM

An important social psychological phenomena which exerts much influence on human behavior in intergroup encounters is ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism has been defined differently by different researchers. Some have defined it as the tendency to view one's own culture as the paragon of value, while others have contended that it is synonymous with high patriotism and ingroup loyalty. Still other social scientists have maintained that it is an attitude of "cultural superiority" and often results in disparagement of outgroups.

This writer contends that the varied definitions reflect different intensities of ethnocentrism and that these intensities will be reflected in language as well as in other facets of behavior. Down's definition (1971) that it entails the application of the standards of one's own culture to human activities in other cultures would characterize ethnocentrism that is fairly low in intensity. On the other hand, Summer's claim (1906) that it frequently culminates in high ingroup loyalty and feelings of antipathy towards outgroups represents that which is of a much greater intensity than the former. In essence, three different intensities of ethnocentrism, conveniently labeled "low", "moderate" and "high", have been suggested to underlie the three communicative distances which consist of: (1) the distance of indifference (reflects insensitivity and obliviousness demonstrated towards outgroups), (2) the distance of avoidance (reflects high ingroup loyalty and avoidance of outgroups) and (3) the distance of disparagement (reflects feelings of hostility towards outgroups and a desire to disparage them).

The term, "communicative distance," essentially represents the psychological distance which may be felt between two or more speakers (see Peng, 1974). Peng maintained that language may be manipulated by a speaker so as to either lengthen or shorten the "communicative distanced" between himself and another. Peng describes "communicative distance" as follows:

> A communicative distance cannot be measured directly. It is not even visible. But we can be sure of its presence when we hear certain words and expressions. In other words, our awareness of a communicative distance in the midst of a conversation depends to a large extent on certain linguistic devices which serve, from the speaker's point of view, to set up the communicative distance, or, from the hearer's point of view to let the hearer know that it has already been set up by the speaker (1974:33).

The three communicative distances indicated above are viewed as corresponding to different levels of a hierarchy of strategies of psycholinguistic distinctiveness. The linguistic variations associated with these distances will reflect the different intergroup and interpersonal functions of the respective distances. Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (in press), similarly, have

suggested that there may be a hierarchy of linguistic strategies (divergent strategies[2]) which reflect varied extents to which individuals in intergroup situations may wish to distinguish their group from outsiders and at times may desire to disparage or ridicule a given outgroup.

> Indeed, as implied by our discussion of speech divergence, it may well be that there is a hierarchy of strategies of psycholinguistic distinctiveness, some of which are more symbolic of ethnic dissociation than others. In this sense, and perhaps both from the perspective of ingroup encoder and outgroup decoder, putative, pronunciation and content differentiation may be considered instances of low psycholinguistic distinctiveness, whereas various forms of accent and dialect divergence may be considered instances of stronger ethnic dissociation. Verbal abuse, the maintenance of or switch to another language in the face of an outgroup speaker (in a bi- or multilingual setting) may be among the most potent of psycholinguistic distinctiveness . . . Language spoken can, therefore, be used as a tactic to maximize the differences between ethnic groups on a valued dimension in the search for a positive distinctiveness (Giles, Bourhis and Taylor, in press).

Although the three communicative distances have been distinguished from one another with respect to their disparate intergroup functions, they should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. Instead it is plausible that there will be much overlap between them and that in some instances it may be difficult to decide whether the linguistic characteristics displayed represent the distance of indifference or distance of avoidance or the distance of avoidance or distance of disparagement. In essence, in some situations the distance may be a hybrid of two distances as the ingroup member may wish to avoid interaction with an outgroup and at the same time may employ speech styles and linguistic characteristics that mildly disparage the outgroup (intentional disparagement). Some linguistic characteristics and speech styles should be viewed as specific to a particular communicative distance and others may be seen as applicable to several distances. The deciding point between one distance and another for some characteristics, however, will depend much on the number and intensity of the given characteristics, e.g., exaggeration of dialect differences, and on the characteristics with which they are associated. Let us describe the three communicative distances and the various characteristics and speech styles believed to be associated with each. It should be remembered, however, that many of the characteristics indicated below may be primarily applicable to the dominant culture of the United States--reflecting the author's background and experience.

Speech associated with the different communicative distances may function in two capacities: (1) to lengthen communicative distance with outgroups and (2) to shorten communicative distance among ingroups members. The linguistic characteristics and speech styles will be described in light of these two types of interaction-- ingroup members conversing with outgroups and ingroup members conversing among themselves. A relatively brief description of the various speech styles and linguistic characteristics will be provided. Those interested in a more detailed description are referred to an earlier paper by this writer (Lukens, 1976).

The Distance of Indifference (low ethnocentrism):

The distance of indifference is established where intergroup tension and ethnocentrism are low. Relatively little hostility is demonstrated by ingroup members towards outgroups and the speech resulting from this distance reflects the view that one's own culture or subculture is the center of everything. Persons establishing this distance do not exhibit concern for understanding the nature and values of another culture and accordingly their choice of speech styles and linguistic characteristics reflect cultural insensitivity and indifference. More specifically, linguistic characteristics marking this distance reflect a failure to decenter from the perspective of one's own culture (racial or ethnic group) when interacting with others and in commenting about other ethnic or racial groups.

It may be concluded that the distance of indifference is characterized by speech reflecting the tendency to attribute to others one's own needs, interests and attitudes without recognizing cultural differences. The speech of more empathic persons, on the other hand, would reflect a more objective and accurate observation of the other person's needs and feelings. Speech reflecting the distance of indifference can be likened to Piaget's egocentric speech which reflects an inability to decenter from one's own perspective (see Piaget, 1955). Unlike Piaget's egocentric speech, however, that associated with the distance of indifference primarily arises in intergroup situations. More specifically, it will occur in those situations where persons are insensitive or oblivious to cultural differences.

Some speech styles which reflect an obliviousness to other cultures are patronizing speech and "foreigner talk". Both frequently emerge in situations where the user of the speech style wishes to convey a message to outgroup members and assumes that he can only be understood by using a stylized form of speech. Patronizing speech or "pidgin-nigger-talk" (Fanon, 1961) is often aimed at blacks by whites who assume that the black man "should know his place". According to Fanon the white man in addressing the black frequently behaves like an adult with a child and starts "smirking, whispering, patronizing and cozening". The black in turn is expected (from the white's point of view) to exhibit the proper marks of subservience and to use appropriate titles in addressing whites. The use of patronizing speech may stem from either intentional ethnocentrism but of a low to moderate intensity or it may result from habit. In the latter instance it would not serve as a linguistic device to maintain social distance but would reflect cultural insensitivity. The accompanying linguistic characteristics would help to reveal the extent to which patronizing speech would be intentional (possibly reflecting the distance of avoidance) or would reflect cultural insensitivity (the distance of indifference).

In conversing with foreigners speech is often simplified and includes many deletions of articles as well as an increased use of infinitives. It also is characterized by a slow tempo and a loud, clear enounciation of individual syllables. Ferguson (1975), moreover, maintained that this speech form is fairly uniform across languages. Implicit is the assumption that if we speak loudly and slowly enough anyone should be able to understand us.

"Nondescriptions" are yet another linguistic characteristic seen as typifying the distance of indifference. These consist of adjectives containing negative prefixes and particles which do not describe what a culture or group of people are like, but rather tell what they are not, e.g., "non-white" or "unambitious". The use of such forms reveals the ignorance and insensitivity of an outsider. 'Nondescriptions carry very little descriptive validity (Gearing, 1970).

The use of lexical items and idiomatic expressions which reflect racist undercurrents but are not intended to disparage an outgroup also characterize the distance of indifference. Some examples include expressions such as "the Negro problem", implying that the black man is the problem, "nonverbal" or "language deficient child" in reference to a child whose language or dialect happens to be different from that of the dominant culture and "culturally deprived" which, like a "nondescription", reveals very little about the traditions, beliefs and life style of a people. Similarly, the terms, "Negro" and "colored" as used in politeness by whites in the United States also may characterize the distance of indifference.

Another characteristic reflecting this distance includes expressions resulting from "symbolic racism" characteristic of many suburban whites (McConahay and Hough, 1976). It is the racism of those who are both sociologically and psychologically "the gentle people of prejudice" (Campbell, 1971; Williams, 1964). Often these persons do not recognize their prejudice, yet it is expressed in such symbols as "neighborhood schools", "welfare rolls", "black anger and militance", "riots", "crime in the streets" and disgruntled comments about affirmative action programs. In essence, symbolic racism is characterized by comments such as "blacks are becoming too demanding, too pushy in their drive for justice and equality, that blacks are not playing by the rules that applied to earlier generations of deprived minorities, and that blacks simply do not deserve their most recent gains". The racist implications are concealed in assertions about the behavior of blacks as a group.

Finally, language maintenance and reluctance to adjust one's speech despite recognition of cultural differences may typify the distance of indifference. Similarly, the tendency for people to cling to the meaning of words regardless of context and possible alternative connotations in other cultures may reflect a low intensity of ethnocentrism. It often is mistakenly felt that many expressions and speech styles of one's own language have exact translations and comparable meanings in other languages.

The Distance of Avoidance (moderate ethnocentrism):

The distance of avoidance is established where intergroup tension and ethnocentrism are moderate. Ingroup members perceive some threat and competition from outgroups but not of the same intensity as that associated with the distance of disparagement (to be described next). This distance is established by ingroup members in order to avoid interaction with outgroups. Ethnic dialects and other linguistic characteristics may be exaggerated in order to make the ingroup appear esoteric and incomprehensible to outsiders thus limiting the amount of interaction with them. Essentially, ingroup members

set up this distance in order: (1) to enhance feelings of ingroup loyalty, (2) to lengthen communicative distance with outgroups, (3) to emphasize the distinctiveness of the ingroup apart from competing outgroups and (4) to avoid or limit the amount of interaction with outgroups.

Ingroup members may manipulate language in a number of ways and invent words and new expressions to set themselves apart from outsiders. Extensive use of jargons characterizes this distance. The use of jargons, cants and argots by various sects, interest groups, professions, prisoners and prostitutes as well as by ethnic enclaves will enable these groups to remain mysterious to outsiders while at the same time will enhance feelings of ingroup loyalty. With higher intensities of ethnocentrism one can expect increased use of these speech forms.

Ingroup members also may remain incomprehensible to outsiders through their use of exophoric pronouns (pronouns whose references are in contexts outside of sentences), limited use of qualifiers, abbreviated speech and other characteristics typical of the restricted code (Bernstein 1967, 1973). Although with the restricted code these characteristics emerge among persons and in situations where feelings, ideas and thoughts are shared and largely taken for granted, with the distance of avoidance they may more importantly serve to enhance feelings of ingroup loyalty and to limit the amount of interaction between ingroups and outgroups. Their use may reflect a desire to withhold information and feelings from outsiders.

Solidarity terms, similarly, may be used by ingroup members to establish the distance of avoidance. The use of these terms along with emphasizing ethnic dialects will enhance linguistic self respect among members of ethnic groups as they distance themselves from outsiders. Terms such as "Black Power" and "black is beautiful" may be strategically placed in speeches to instill feelings of cultural pride (Labov, 1973). By the same token aversive expressions may be employed in intergroup situations to emphasize ingroup-outgroup distinctiveness. Such terms as "us versus them" and "you people" may be employed.

Various dialect and accent divergences, furthermore, may emphasize the distinctiveness of the ingroup setting it apart from outgroups. Particular pronunciation patterns may be exaggerated and syntactic structures emphasized by ingroup members in order to distance themselves from outsiders. Similarly, particular phonological characteristics of outgroups may be scrupulously avoided where ingroup members desire to dissociate themselves from a particular outgroup (see Giles, Bourhis and Taylor, in press).

Finally, the distance of avoidance may be set up through the adoption of new social dialects or by using a dialect associated with a specific geographical region. Many blacks whose parents and grandparents have migrated to northern cities from the South, for example, have reverted to using and emphasizing colloquial expressions and other dialect features associated with the southern part of the United States. McDavid (1951) contended that the adoption of dialects from different geographical regions and invention of new social dialects by racial and ethnic groups are associated with fairly high intergroup tension.

The Distance of Disparagement (high ethnocentrism):

The distance of disparagement is established where much animosity is exhibited towards outgroups. It arises where ingroups and outgroups compete for the same resources and perceive one another as highly threatening. Where one cannot take flight from an outgroup but must confront it (fight it) speech will be used to disparage the outgroup as opposed to its reflecting a desire to avoid interaction. The greater the extent to which ingroup members perceive their ethnic identity and the welfare of the ingroup to be threatened by an outgroup, the greater the likelihood that they will employ various linguistic characteristics and speech styles for the purpose of demeaning and ridiculing the outgroup or outgroups. Essentially, linguistic characteristics demarcating this distance are used to disparage outgroups.

The use of pejorative expressions to distinguish one's own ethnic group or social class from that of others is characteristic of the distance of disparagement. Specifically, Davis, Gardner and Gardner (1941) in a case study pointed out that in the community of the southern United States which they studied pejorative expressions were frequently employed to lengthen social distance. These consisted of expressions such as "people not our kind", "good people, but nobody" and "snobs trying to push their way up". Where highly racist attitudes exist towards blacks and high "ethnic threat" is perceived more extreme types of expressions may be employed. For example, expressions reflecting the "nigger myth" from the Reconstruction period of the South may be used (see Logue, 1976).

Ethnic or national slurs intended to poke fun at alleged national or ethnic groups also often are used to disparage outgroups. Although in some instances ethnic slurs may not be used for the purpose of disparaging outsiders, in many instances they function in this capacity. Essentially, accompanying extralinguistic characteristics and vocal cues such as intonation will reveal to the hearer the extent to which these terms should be taken seriously or merely considered as used in jest (Dundes, 1971).

Imitation or mockery of speech styles of outgroups also may characterize the distance of disparagement. Speech forms intended for the purpose of mimicking the speech patterns of outgroups usually arise where ethnocentrism is fairly intense and ingroup members wish to ridicule an outgroup. Expressions such as "hey man", "soul brother" and other aspects of black jargon may be used contemptuously by whites in the United States. Similarly, whites also may imitate the phonology and rhythm patterns of Black English yet will do so in a facetious manner.

Finally, the use of ethnophaulisms, derogatory nicknames for different racial and ethnic groups, also is a characteristic of the distance of disparagement. Ethnophaulisms and other forms of verbal abuse, including "flettoric" or four-letter rhetoric, will primarily occur where ethnocentrism is of extreme intensity. Palmore (1962) has suggested that the number of ethnophaulisms used by a culture or subculture towards outsiders is associated with the intensity of ethnocentrism of the ethnic or racial group. By the same token, one could speculate that the number of different ethnophaulisms

and frequency of their use by ingroup members might provide an unobtrusive measure of intensity of ethnocentrism of particular individuals. By reinforcing disparaging evaluations of outgroup members ethnophaulisms lengthen communicative distance.

PILOT STUDY: SPEECH SAMPLES FROM VARIED SITUATIONS

The pilot study was conducted in Milwaukee, Wisconsin which is characterized by much ethnic diversity and is in the process of carrying out an integration plan to accomplish a "racial balance" in the public schools. Like many other cities where court ordered desegregation has been instituted, Milwaukee, too, has faced much resistance from groups of parents and community persons opposed to the busing. The opposition to Milwaukee's desegregation plan has ranged from mild by some groups to intense opposition by others. The resistance to school desegregation (namely intensity of the resistance) has seemed to parallel the degree of ethnocentrism exhibited by the various groups speaking out against desegregation. Some have exhibited mild ethnocentrism and indifference towards blacks and other white groups opposed to it have exhibited moderate to intense ethnocentrism and exhibit much antipathy towards blacks. In essence, some opposed groups seemed to demonstrate attitudes conforming to the distance of indifference, while othersexhibited attitudes and behaviors suggesting the distance of avoidance and distance of disparagement. Essentially, speech samples were collected from meetings of the various groups representing different intensities of ethnocentrism and animosity towards blacks over a six-month period. Only four samples, however, were used for the pilot study.

Following the first phase of data collection involving the tape recording of antibusing meetings sponsored by the concerned groups as well as an indepth interview with the leader of one of the most vehemently opposed groups (a group demonstrating high ethnocentrism and hatred of blacks), the writer randomly selected four speech samples (all three communicative distances were believed to be represented) to be played for a group of untrained judges. Speech samples were randomly selected from those believed to represent all three communicative distances so as to insure inclusion of all the distances. The speech samples and background of the person and the group he or she respresents are provided below. Each sample was about one minute in length.

Speech Sample I: The first speech sample was obtained in a situation independent of the meetings against busing. It was gathered at a meeting with personnel from the City of Milwaukee Commission on Aging and the Black Caucus which consists of elderly blacks. The tone of voice of speech sample # I is loud and demeaning and seemed to indicate a desire to want to avoid interaction with blacks. Only the more relevant parts are presented:

> "Madame Chairman, it really disturbs me to hear that you people are not aware of the many programs that the Commission on Aging has been able to provide for you people-- and there is absolutely not excuse for it. . . And I have just received 1000 programs from the Advisory Council on summer programs

and will be happy to distribute them to you. I don't know where you are all from, where you are all stationed, but if you tell me how many I will bring them to you. My job is to serve the elderly of Milwaukee and wherever you are I will bring them to you. I'll have more run off for your benefit so leave me an address and you can take it from there. Would you do this please?. . .And I would like to mention, I would just like to ask this question. Of the people here how many of you have your senior citizen I.D. card with your picture on it? How many of you have applied for it? Let's see the hands. Very good, I'm real happy. I'm real happy."

Speech Sample II: This sample of speech was obtained at an antibusing meeting sponsored by an organization which maintains that it's position against busing is not related to racial issues, but rather because "it is wasting tax payers' money" and"it takes away from freedom to control affairs at the local level". The person whose speech was recorded is the instigator of an organization which claims to have goals opposite to those of the NAACP. In essence, he instituted the organization in order to promote the welfare of the dominant white majority of the United States and to "oppose minority rule". The speech reflects this man's frustration at being unable to get a "good paying job because all jobs go to blacks". He hopes to get a "high paying job" so as to make financially possible an all white school which he hopes to establish in the near future (reflecting the desire to avoid interaction with blacks and other minorities). His tirade is in response to a statement in defense of black concerns-- or at least a statement suggesting that the opposition to busing should not be focused on racial issues. Again only the most relevant parts of the speech sample are presented:

"Sounds very good, but it is not the way it works in this country. This country is based upon the color of one's skin and some people take a big bite of the pie and other people get the slag. . . I'm damn tired of hearing people talk about abstractions when our men can't get work (bang's fist on table). Our men are told they needn't apply for jobs. Our men are told to die some place before they get a job out of a damn country like this. And what do we get for it. You pay the majority of taxes-- You get nothing back from it but a slap in the face from these drooling liberals. Well, I'm telling you we got to fight for our rights and we've got to knock someone over the back of a chair in order to do it. Oh, I'm fed up with all this talk (referring to the group that invited him to the anti-busing meeting). . . Alright I'll lay it all out here.. You invited me here. . . I see a bloody monopoly operating in this place. I'm taking my family and walking out and

don't anybody from this outfit call me or the Alliance again. . . (retorts to question from member of the organization) It's too late sir. If you've been duped that's your problem. Save it for the judge. . . Just wait and see what I do about these minorities"-(unintelligible speech as he leaves and continues ranting)

Speech Sample III: The third speech sample was collected at a forum by the various candidates running for the School Board. Members of the audience were instructed to ask questions to all the candidates in order to get their position on various issues. A Latino women (Puerto Rican) asked the candidates what they would do if elected to office to meet the needs of the Latino community (a distinctive minority). The first candidate to answer the question was one who is against busing and is active in one of the opposed groups. He supports the concept of the "neighborhood school" and would not allow anyone in his family to be bused to another part of town. He answers the question directed to him in a "hedging manner" and uses a muffled voice.

"Madame - I understand your position and know the Hispanic people would like to be considered a minority so that they will be included in the decision. Judge Reynolds has made the ruling and while he is up there there is nothing we can do to defy a Federal judge. . . And as a matter of fact I will venture to say that the majority of the Board sympathizes with you and that they would like to have you classed with the minority group-- which is exact if I understand you correctly--That's what you're requesting, aren't you?"

(Woman responds by saying that she is not just a minority but a distinctive minority-- that Hispanic problems are different from the problems faced by blacks)

School Board candidate continues-- "Now we're going to (raises voice in form of question), going to have different kinds of minorities? (sighs by audience). . . Didn't I understand that you are asking for a distinctive minority? The only way I can answer that is then we might as well have a minority for the Poles and for the Germans and for the Spanish and for the French-- You can see my rationale-- "

Speech Sample IV: This sample of speech was tape recorded in an interview with the leader of a group which is vehemently opposed to integration and is afraid that the United States might degenerate due to "race mixing". The organization publishes a paper that promotes "white power" and group members believe that blacks in the United States should be sent back to Africa. The group has launched an active campaign against busing. No permission was granted to the writer to attend any meetings and little informa-

tion was given about public rallies. In order to attend any meetings or even be kept informed of public activities of the organization it was made clear that I would have to go before a screening committee. Also the leader made it clear that they needed to have a "campus representative". This made it impossible to obtain speech samples of the group members in a meeting. A small segment of speech collected during the interview consisted of the following: (The leader used a monotone throughout the entire interview, although pitch of voice varied for a few statements)

> "That's what happened and this was total integration-- For 500 years whites and niggers been living side by side and intermarrying and all that. On top of that there was this 15 year old nigger-boy and he had a white foster father who was a medical doctor-- O.K.? Then they came along to this nigger-boy and said if you kill your father then you can have these instruments and your father's medical diploma and you can be the doctor.-- So this dumb nigger kid killed this white doctor. Now that just shows you that these niggers walking among us-- supposedly civilized-- aren't civilized at all. They are still barbarians. The only thing that keeps them in line is the police power of the state. If you were to remove all the police of Milwaukee the niggers would revert right back to their primitive stages -- they really are-- They're savages"

The four speech samples were played for a group of untrained judges, approximately 25 upper level undergraduates who were enrolled in an introductory class in intercultural communication.[3] After being given a brief description of the three communicative distances, the underlying intergroup functions of each but not examples of them, the judges were then asked to rate the speech samples with respect to the three communicative distances. Their ratings were not exactly what was anticipated by the writer. The results are presented in the following chart. The discrepancy in the number of ratings for the different speech samples reflects the fact that some respondents did not rate all the speech samples.

ASSIGNMENT OF SPEECH SAMPLES TO THE THREE COMMUNICATIVE DISTANCES OR TO "NONE"

Communicative Distance	Speech Sample			
	Samp. I	Samp. II	Samp. III	Samp. IV
Distance of Indifference	3	0	9	3
Distance of Avoidance	6	3	12	2
Distance of Disparagement	12	19	1	16
None	1	1	0	3

The findings were not as anticipated as the writer had expected that the first sample of speech would have been rated as reflecting the distance of avoidance or possibly the distance of indifference more than as reflecting the distance of disparagement. The second speech sample it was expected would be rated as reflecting the distance of disparagement and possibly the distance of avoidance. The results, however, clearly showed that the distance of disparagement was most commonly opted for. The third speech sample also was rated differently than anticipated. It was expected that persons would rate it as reflecting the distance of indifference, but instead more viewed it as representing the distance of avoidance. Finally, with the last speech sample it was anticipated that the judges would nearly unanimously rate it as typifying the distance of disparagement. Instead, several saw it as being "none" and several rated it as reflecting the distance of indifference.

The unanticipated findings, it is felt, largely resulted from the fact that the speech samples were collected in contexts that were not comparable. For example, speech samples # I and #III were collected in intergroup situations involving blacks and whites, while #II was obtained in an ingroup situation (the leader of one group interacting with members of another anti-busing group) and # IV was obtained in an interview. Descriptive comments by those who rated # IV as reflecting the distance of indifference rather than the distance of disparagement revealed that some judges had attributed it to the former because of the "comparatively calm tone of voice". Others reported that the speaker was "unanimated" compared to # II. Speech samples # I and #II were frequently rated as reflecting the distance of disparagement because the individual "sounded angry, resentful and antagonistic". Those who rated speech sample # I as representing the distance of avoidance frequently alluded to the extensive use of terms such as "you people". One person who rated it as such commented that "her voice was loud and domineering and that she was probably intentionally speaking very clearly and slowly in an attempt to be condescending. Thus this person viewed the speech as intentionally patronizing which would conform to the distance of avoidance.

Based on the findings from the pilot study some modifications will be made in the proposed methodology for a study to be undertaken by this writer concerning communicative distances and black-white differences in attributing linguistic characteristics and speech styles to the three distances. Most importantly, context will be controlled for so that the judges will only rate speech samples which have been drawn from similar contexts. Thus separate tasks may be given wherein judges may first rate speech samples gotten in interview situations, secondly, those obtained in intergroup situations and finally, those collected in situations involving ingroup members interacting with other ingroup members but making comments about an outgroup. In addition to controlling for context topic also may have to be controlled for.

Another modification will entail providing judges with samples of speech reflecting the different communicative distances prior to the actual test. They would be given an opportunity to listen to samples seen as representing all three, but would not be told which distance each reflects so as to eliminate possible biasing of the results. The preliminary playing of speech samples for the judges prior to the actual test would accustom them to the types of speech samples to follow and hopefully result in more discernful judgments.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

The theoretical framework concerning the three communicative distances represents a new direction in which sociolinguistic research should proceed. For too long sociolinguists and other scholars concerned with language have failed to examine the manner in which syntax, phonological variants, lexical items, discourse structure and idiomatic expressions may be influenced by people's moods, feelings, prejudices and motivations. Sociolinguists have until very recently seen linguistic variation as only resulting from such variables as age, sex, occupation and social class. The neglect to consider the impact of many social psychological variables on language was a major oversight which left much linguistic variation unaccounted for.

Although today there is much greater interest in the impact of psychological and intergroup variables on language, most of the writings, as pointed out at the outset of the paper, have been concerned with language as it may be manipulated in interpersonal and intergroup encounters to enhance cooperation and communication. This is certainly a worthy area of research, but unfortunately the interest demonstrated in speech accommodation and speech convergence does not reveal much about how speech can be used to create social distance. Giles, Bourhis and Taylor point out the neglect of researchers to study speech divergence as much as speech convergence in the following:

> While convergence has stimulated a good deal of research interest, divergence and the maintenance of one's own speech have received little empirical attention. This is an important oversight since non-converging speech is an important medium often used by ethnic groups as a symbolic tactic for maintaining their identity and cultural distinctiveness. This was exemplified recently when for the first time the Arab nations issued their communique to the world not in English as they did usually, but in Arabic (in press).

The pilot study just discussed was limited for it was only concerned with judgments of speech of whites in the United States and specifically Milwaukee, Wisconsin. If the concept of "communicative distance", particularly its manifestation in intergroup situations (the three communicative distances), is to prove useful to scholars and pragmatists alike then an effort must be exerted to do comparative studies of what constitutes

the three communicative distances in different cultures and in different social milieus. We must not be ethnocentric in our study of communicative distances.

Just as intercultural communication scholars are beginning to study stereotyping from two or more cultures' view points, e.g., blacks' stereotypes of whites and whites' stereotypes of blacks, similarly, communicative distances should be studied from a reciprocal point of view. Through gaining a better understanding of types of linguistic characteristics and speech styles seen by blacks and whites as used by speakers of their own race to establish the various communicative distances one would be that much farther ahead in understanding breakdowns in communication. In the past many "communication breakdowns" were inappropriately attributed to "lack of communication". Moreover, researchers also should examine black-white differences and differences between other culture groups in their attribution of linguistic characteristics used by outgroup members to the various distances. Only by doing comparative studies across ethnic and racial groups can one hope to "bridge the communication gap".

FOOTNOTES

(1) There are conflicting views concerning the nature and origin of ethnocentrism. During the 1950s a great many writings suggested that it is largely associated with certain personality syndromes such as mental rigidity. More recently, however, proponents of realistic group conflict theory have suggested that ethnocentrism is a social social phenomenon resulting from the "real" character of outgroups. This writer adheres more to the latter point of view than the former but recognizes that it may result from both to a degree. Social variables, however, may play a larger role in its emergence. For additional information see Lukens (1976) "Ethnocentric Speech: Its Nature and Implications"-- Paper presented at the International Communication Association, Portland, Oregon.

(2) The term, "divergent strategies", refers to the tendency for a speaker to alter his manner of speaking in a direction different from that of an interlocutor. Divergent strategies may be employed where a speaker wishes to emphasize his distinctiveness from an interlocutor. Divergence may occur on a number of linguistic dimensions. It is the opposite of speech convergence wherein a speaker shifts his speech in the direction of that of an interlocutor. For a more detailed discussion of these speech strategies see Gile, H., Bourhis, R.Y.and D.M. Taylor, (in press) "Towards a Theory of Language in Ethnic Group Relations" in Language, Ethnicity and Intergroup Relations. Also Giles, H. and P.F. Powesland (1975) Speech Style and Social Evaluation. London and New York, Academic Press.

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